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Braley Introduced "Fresh Produce Safety Act" Last Month

Washington, Apr 4 - Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) today visited McKinstry Elementary School's cafeteria in Waterloo to discuss food safety legislation he introduced in Congress last month and to eat lunch with students.

In March, Braley introduced the *Fresh Produce Safety Act* (HR 5620), a bill to boost safety procedures and standards for fresh produce sold in the United States.

"Recent food recalls raise questions about the safety of our food supply," Braley said. "If nothing else, we must ensure that Iowa kids are protected from unsafe and contaminated food. Iowa's school cafeterias are vigilant, but they need more support from the FDA.

"That's why I introduced the *Fresh Produce Safety Act* to take needed steps to reform our food safety system and ensure that our food supply has proper oversight."

Last Friday, the Associated Press reported that numerous Iowa school districts were included on a US Department of Agriculture list of schools that received beef included in February's recall of 143 million pounds from a California slaughterhouse.

Braley's *Fresh Produce Safety Act* gives the FDA authority to make voluntary food safety guidelines mandatory. The bill also requires stepped-up inspections of operations that grow and process fresh produce like spinach.

Other key provisions of the bill include: (1) a surveillance system to identify sources of fresh produce contamination; (2) a research program to identify and prevent contamination of produce; and (3) a requirement that FDA rules are written to ensure that imported produce is grown and processed with the same safety standards as the US.

Braley's action on food safety comes on the heels of an effort late last year to pressure the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) into strengthening oversight and improving the screening of imported children's toys for lead contamination and other safety hazards.